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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, RQM/OIS
ATTN : L
FROM : Field Operations Officer, FBID
SUBJECT: Guatemalan Radio Silence

DATE: 28 May 1954

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

1. TGWA, Guatemala City, the official short-wave station of the Guatemala Government has not been heard since its broadcast of 20 May 1954. A thorough search of all short-wave broadcast bands indicates clearly that the transmitter (which is normally well heard) has been taken off the air. The reason for this silence is not known, but it does not necessarily result from political causes. Technical reasons seem more probable.

2. TGWA utilizes a rather old transmitter (power output 10 KW) which in recent years has disappeared from the air for prolonged periods as a result of equipment failures. FBID has just obtained, through private channels, a current official document from the radio station which mentions that a new high-power (50 KW) short-wave transmitter is about to be installed. It is entirely possible that this work is now underway and that space or other requirements have necessitated the removal of the old transmitter from the building to make way for the new one. It is also possible that another of the frequent breakdowns has occurred in the old transmitter.

3. The TGWA document also stated that a new 50 KW medium-wave (i.e., standard broadcast band) transmitter will be installed. Since the medium-wave is not normally audible to FBID, the operating status of that transmitter cannot be determined by our monitors; however, it is improbable that simultaneous equipment breakdowns would occur, and illogical that the Government would remove its program from the air totally for new equipment installation, at least without public announcement, which certainly would have been intercepted by FBID on 20 May.

FOR THE CHIEF, FBID:

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